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The book contains analyses and ‘back-translations’ of a selected passage from translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in around 100 languages and dialects; it was published to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the original publication of *Alice*.

**This document comprises:**

1. An article analysing Marvin Sumner’s translation of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* into Scouse (Liverpool English). The article focuses on some general principles involved in ‘translating’ into dialect literature, and on some of the details of the passage selected for focus. (The article is entitled ‘*Analysin de werdz ov de Scouse Alice*: translating Standard English into Scouse’, and was written by Patrick Honeybone.)
2. An edited version of the passage in focus, as translated into Scouse by Marvin Sumner from 1990. The passage, selected by the editors of the *Alice in a World of Wonderlands* volume, is around half of the chapter entitled ‘A Mad Tea Party’ and runs from “‘*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat*’” to “...trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot.” (The translation was done by Marvin Sumner.)
3. A ‘back-translation’ of the passage from Scouse into Standard English, with accompanying notes. (The back-translation and notes were done by Patrick Honeybone.)
4. The original version of the passage in focus, scanned in from the typescript. (The translation was done by Marvin Sumner.)

## *Analysin de werdz ov de Scouse Alice: translating Standard English into Scouse*

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This version of *Alice* renders Carroll's text in 'Scouse', which is the name commonly given in Britain to the dialect of English spoken in and around the city of Liverpool (in academic discourse, it is often called 'Liverpool English'). The translation is thus a piece of 'dialect literature', which means that it is composed wholly in a nonstandard dialect, and is essentially aimed at a readership who speak that nonstandard dialect (Shorrocks 1996, 386). Because of this, there is not much to be explained in these notes in terms of word choice, for three reasons: (i) the translation's target 'language' is a dialect of English, like the source 'language' (Standard English), and everyone who speaks Scouse understands Standard English as well, (ii) the target dialect is most clearly distinct from Standard English at the phonological level, and does not have a large 'dialect lexis' which differs from that of other dialects, and (iii) the translator has kept quite close to the original, even choosing to retain some archaisms, such as "between whiles" which is rendered as *between wilez*. All this means that the Scouse version is lexically very similar to the original, so the translator has not been faced with the kind of problems, when dealing with Carroll's nonsense and word-play, that have troubled those translating *Alice* into completely different languages, spoken in different cultures. This does not mean that anyone who can read English would easily understand the Scouse version, however. Several of the characteristics of the text that I discuss here make it look very different from Standard English.

There has never been a serious claim that Scouse is a different language to English (unlike Scots, for example). Scouse would need a grammar and lexis which are substantially different from Standard English for that, which it does not have. Some aspects of the grammar of Scouse are different to the grammar of Standard English, but these are typically widely shared with other nonstandard dialects – for example Carroll's "Alice gently remarked" is translated as *Alice sed ded gentul like*, showing that adverbs modifying verbs do not take a *-ly* inflection in Scouse, as is common in nonstandard English. The lexis of Scouse is practically all shared with other varieties of English, including Standard English. The phrase just quoted also shows some of the very few nonstandard words used in the passage (*ded* means "very" and *like* is used as a discourse particle) but these, too, are widespread in British dialects, at least. Some other words in the Scouse translation are closer to general British slang than region-specific dialect forms, such as *dogtired* and *narked* (which means "annoyed"). The fact that Scouse is not greatly different from Standard English in its grammar and lexis is partly explained by its origins as a relatively 'new' dialect of English. Scouse traces its roots back only to the nineteenth century (see Honeybone 2007), when it emerged from a dialect-mixing process which 'rubbed off' many of the grammatical and lexical features which differentiated the dialects (from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) which mixed in Liverpool when Scouse was emerging.

Scouse is mainly differentiated from other dialects of English at the phonological level, and this is well represented in the passage. Dialect literature often uses respelling conventions to adapt the orthography of English words to reflect the phonology of the dialect in question (see Honeybone & Watson, to appear, for a discussion of this in other Scouse dialect literature). Some dialects have centuries-old conventions for this. Scouse dialect literature properly began in the 1960s and makes use of Standard English orthographic conventions to spell some Scouse phonological features – those which are salient to speakers, and can be

straightforwardly respelled. I discuss four here. Scouse (i) lacks the vowel contrast found in most dialects in the pair “fur” and “fair” (and elsewhere) – for most Scouse speakers, the vowel that other dialects have only in “fair” is used in both words, and this is represented in the passage by such spellings as *werd* “word”, *ferst* “first”, *terned* “turned”, *lernin* “learning” and *werse* “worse”. All these spellings draw attention to the fact that the vowels of these words are not the same as in other forms of English, and the Scouse reader knows precisely which vowel is meant. Contemporary dialect literature is often not consistent in respelling dialect features, and while this passage is largely (perhaps unusually) consistent, it is not completely regular – “murdering” is spelled *murdrin*, for example, so, while *murdrin* spells the elision of the unstressed medial vowel, and also what is sometimes called “g-dropping” (the pronunciation of unstressed *-ing* with an alveolar, rather than a velar nasal, a feature which is represented 100% of the time in the passage considered here), *murdrin* does not respell the vowel feature just discussed.

Other phonological features of Scouse spelled in the passage are: (ii) *th*-stopping, which involves words which in most other varieties of English feature fricatives (prolongable noisy sounds) of the kind which are spelled with “th”, but which can be pronounced in Scouse with stops (sounds which involve a complete closure in the mouth) – this is represented in the translation by such spellings as *de* “the”, *sumtin* “something”, *ting* “thing”, *datz* “that’s”, *wid* “with”, *diss* “this”, *der* “there/their”, *tink* “think”, *doe* “though”, and is spelled quite regularly, with some consistent conventions (such as *denn*, which is always used for “then”), but there is also some variation (for example, both *wid* and *widd* are used for “with”); (iii) *h*-dropping, which is the absence of /h/, and which is spelled very consistently in the passage, so that the March Hare and the Hatter are always *de March* ‘are and *de* ‘atter, along with other spellings like ‘ardly “hardly”, ‘ead “head”, ‘urry “hurry” and ‘erself “herself”, while the only occurrence of /h/ in the passage is in *herd* “heard”; and (iv) T-to-R, which is the pronunciation of mostly word-final /t/ as /r/ when the following word begins with a vowel, as in *purrou* “put out”, *worrappenz* “what happens”, *irron* “it on”, *arrall* “at all”, *burri* “but I”, *arrova* “out of a”, *birra* “bit of” – this is very consistently represented because T-to-R is only possible with a small set of words such as those featured here (“put, what, it, but” etc., and also occasionally in the middle of words, as in the authentic *gerrin* “getting” and *berrer* “better”), but it is not possible in words like “minute” or “without”, which are accurately represented with “t”, not “r”, in *minnit* or “minute or” and *widdout inneruptin* “without interrupting”.

Of the four features discussed here, all distinguish Scouse from Standard/Reference English and are more geographically constrained than the grammatical and lexical features discussed above, but some are shared with some other dialects. Feature (i) is almost unique to Scouse, (ii) is shared with only a few dialects (eg, Southern Irish English, New York City English), (iii) is shared with most dialects from England, and (iv) is shared with other dialects from Northern England. Some phonological features of Scouse cannot easily be represented in dialect literature, thus the characteristic Scouse patterns of intonation cannot be represented in writing, and Scouse ‘lenition’, in which stops like /t/ and /k/ can be pronounced like fricatives (so that “back” sounds like the German pronunciation of *Bach*), is not phonologically salient (see Honeybone & Watson, 2013, for further discussion of this).

The spelling of phonological dialect features, along with the few grammatical and lexical features, means that the translation is quite different from Carroll’s original, but the translator has also struggled to make the translation seem even more different than these dialect features alone allow. He has made considerable use of “eye dialect”, in which respellings are used which simply respell a word in a way which is consistent with its pronunciation in many varieties, including the relevant standard/reference dialect, thus *clozed* “closed” is entirely consistent with English orthographic conventions, and may be a better

spelling than the standard version, as it shows that the medial fricative is like that in “zap”, not that in “sap”, but this goes for practically all varieties of English, and therefore the respelling does not represent anything specifically Scouse. This is not to say that there is anything improper about the use of eye dialect in dialect literature – there is no reason why Standard English spellings should be used to spell Scouse. Other eye dialect forms in the passage include *twinkel* “twinkle”, *kontinyewed* “continued”, *reezun* “reason”, *kride* “cried”, and *kwestchun* “question”. Some spelling conventions can be seen as eye dialectal, even though they would not work for all varieties of English, because they work for practically all varieties of English from England, including the standard/reference form. For example, a letter “r” can be used after a vowel to indicate that the vowel is long, as in *yornin* “yawning”, *orl* “all”, *warked* “walked” and *karnt* “can’t”, because Scouse is a non-rhotic dialect, as are most accents in England, including prestige varieties (unlike US and Scottish varieties, where rhoticity is the norm). In non-rhotic accents, “r” sounds can only occur if they are followed by a vowel sound, so the letter “r” is not pronounced in a word like *far*, and the letter is free to be reinterpreted as a length-marker in the way just described. Some eye dialect conventions are used very consistently (eg, *agenn* is used for all six occurrences of “again” in the passage), but others show variation (thus “yawning” is once spelled *yornin* and once *yawnin*). Finally, in this connection, the author has used spellings which indicate “connected speech” phenomena, which affect all varieties of English when they are spoken quickly, like the elision of the unstressed vowel in *murdrin* “mudering”, *intrest* “interest” and *konsidrin* “considering” and the elision of certain consonants in consonant clusters, such as the medial /t/ in *triumfanly* “triumphantly” and *innerupt* “interrupt”.

Many standard spellings are also used in the passage, however. For example *bat* is not spelled “batt”, *came* is not spelled “keim” and *tea* is spelled “tea” in all six occurrences – never “tee”. It is not clear what governs the use of eye dialect spellings, but it is quite common in the passage. On the first page of the manuscript, I count 62 words with eye dialect spelling (27.7% of all forms), which contrasts with 89 words with standard spelling (39.7%) and 73 words (32.6%) with a spelling which represents Scouse pronunciation (it is difficult to count words for this precisely, however, because some feature both Scouse spellings and eye dialect, like *datz* “that’s”, where the “d” represents Scouse *th*-stopping, but the “tz” works as an unorthodox spelling of the final two sounds in all varieties).

In summary, this “Scouse interpretation of *Alice in Wonderland*” is successful on several levels in representing *Alice* in Scouse, and also features other common characteristics of dialect literature, such as eye dialect and variation in the use of orthographic conventions. To call it an “interpretation” seems right – there has been little translation in the normal sense of Carroll’s text. The most creative aspect of the text lies in the representation of Scouse as something which is (largely phonologically) different to Standard English.

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## Scouse (variety of English) 1990

LEWIS CARROLL

*A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland*

Unpublished typescript. 1990

Translated by Marvin R. Sumner

*“Twinkel, twinkel, littul bat!*

*’Ow I wunder wot yor at!”*

“Yunnaw de song doyeray?”

“I’ve herd sumtin like it,” sed Alice.

“It goezon, yernow,” de ’atter kontinyewed, “in diss way:—

*Up above de werld yew fly,*

*Like a tea-tray in de sky.*

*Twinkel, twinkel—”*

’Ere de Dormowse shuk itzself an began singin innitz sleep “*Twinkel, twinkel, twinkel, twinkel—*” an wenn on so long dat dey ’ad to pinch it to make it stop.

“Well, I’d ’ardly finished de ferst verse,” sed de ’atter, “wenn de Kween bawllled out, ’E’z murdrin de time! Off wid ’iz ’ead!”

“’Ow dredfully savidge!” eksclaimed Alice.

“An ever since dat,” de ’atter wenn on inna mornful tone, “’E woan do a ting I ask! It’s orlwayz sixa klok now.”

A brite idea came into Alicez ’ead. “Is dat de reezun so meny tea-tingz are purrout ’ere?” she asked.

“Yes, datz it,” sed de ’atter wid a sigh: “It’s orlwayz tea-time, an weev no time to wash de tingz between wilez.”

“Denn yew keep moovin rownd, I suppoze?” sed Alice.

“Eggzakly so,” sed de ’atter: “az de tingz get uzed up.”

“But worrappenz wenn yew cum to de beginnin agenn?” Alice ventured to ask.

“Suppoze we change de subjekt,” de March ’are interrupted, yawnin. “I’m gerrin tired ov diss. I vote de yung gerl tellz uz a story.”

“I’m afrade I doan now won,” sed Alice, radder alarmed at de propozal.

“Denn de Dormowse shall!” dey both kride. “Wake up, Dormowse!” An dey pinched irron both sidez at wonce.

De Dormowse slowly opened its eyez. “I wosn asleep,” it sed inna ’orse feebl voice, “I herd every werd yew lot wer sayin.”

“Telluz a story!” sed de March ’are.

“Yes, pleeze do lar!” pleaded Alice.

“An be kwick abarrit,” added de ’atter, “or yew’ll be asleep agenn befor it’s dunn.”

“Wonce upon a time der wer three sisterz,” de Dormowse began inna grate ’urry; “an der namez wer Elsie, Lacie, an Tillie; an dey lived at de bottum ov a well—”

“Wot did dey live on?” sed Alice, ’oo orlwayz tuk a grate intrest in kwestchunz ov eetin an drinkin.

“Dey lived on treekel,” sed de Dormowse, after tinkin a minnit or two.

“Dey kuddena dunn dat, yunnnow,” Alice sed ded gentul like. “dey’da been ill.”

“So dey wer,” sed de Dormowse; “*very* ill.”

Alice tried a littel to fancy to ’erself wot sucha ekstraordinry way ov livin wud be like, burrit puzzelled ’er to much: so she wenn on: “But why did de live at de bottum ov a well?”

“Take sum mor tea,” de March ’are sed to Alice, earnestly.

“I’ve ’ad nothin yet,” Alice replied inna offended tone: “so I karnt take mor.”

“Yew meen yew karnt take *less*,” sed de ’atter: “it’s ded eezy ter take *mor* dann nothin.”

“Nobody asked *yor* opinyun,” sed Alice.

“’ooz makin persunal remarkz now?” de ’atter asked triumfanly.

Alice dinnt kwite now wot ter say ter diss: so she ’elped ’erself to sum tea an bred-an-butter, an denn terned ter de Dormowse, an repeeted ’er kwestchun. “Why did dey live at de bottum ov a well?”

De Dormowse agenn tuk a minnit or two ter tink abowt it, an denn sed “It wos a treekel-well.”

“Derz no such ting!” Alice wos gettin ded narked, but de ’atter an de March ’are went “Sh! Sh!” an de Dormowse sulkily remarked, “If yew karnt be civil, yew’d berrer finish de story for yorself.”

“No, pleeze go on!” Alice sed ded ’umbel. “I woan innerupt yew agenn. I der say der may be *won*.”

“Won, indeed!” sed de Dormowse indignantly. ’Owever, ’e konsented ter go on. “An so deez three littel sisterz—dey wer lernin ter draw, yunnow—”

“Wot did dey draw?” sed Alice, kwite forgettin ’er promise.

“Treekel,” sed de Dormowse, widdout konsidrin arrall, diss time.

“I wanna kleen cup,” innerupted de ’atter: “Letz orl moov won place on.”

’E mooved on az ’e spoke, an de Dormowse follied ’im: de March ’are mooved into de Dormowsez place, an Alice radder unwillinly tuk de place ov de March ’are. De ’atter wos de only won ’oo gorreny advantidge from de change; an Alice wos a gud deel werse off dann befor, az de March ’are ’ad just upset de milk-jug into ’iz plate.

Alice dinnt wish to offend de Dormowse agenn, so she began very korshusly: “Burri doan unnerstand. Wer did dey draw de treekel from?”



“Yewkin draw warter arrova warter-well,” sed de ’atter; “so I shud tink yew kud draw treekel arrova treekel-well — eh, stewpid?”

“But dey wer *in* de well,” Alice sed ter de Dormowse, not chewzin ter notice diss last remark.

“Ov korse dey wer,” sed de Dormowse: “well in.”

Diss anser so konfuzed pore Alice, dat she let de Dormowse go on for sum time widdout inneruptin it.

“Dey wer lernin to draw,” de Dormowse wenn on, yornin an rubbin its eyez, for it wos gettin dogtired; “an dey drew orl sortza tingz — everytin dat beginz widd a M—”

“Why widd a M?” sed Alice.

“Why not?” sed de March ’are.

Alice wos silent.

De Dormowse ’ad clozed its eyez by diss time, anwos goin off into a doze; but, on bein pinched by de ’atter; it woke up agenn widd a littel shreek, an wenn on: “—dat beginz widd a M, such az mowsetrapz, an de moon, an memry, an muchness — yew now yew say tingz are ‘much ov a muchness’ — d’yer ever see such a ting az a drawin ov a muchness?”

“Reely, now yor askin,” sed Alice, ded konfewsed, “I doan tink—”

“Denn yew shudden tawk,” sed de ’atter.

Diss birra roodness wos mor dann Alice kud take: she gorrup inna big ’uff, an warked off: de Dormowse fell asleep instanly, an neider ov de udderz tuk de leest birra notice ov ’er goin, doe she lukked back wonce or twice, ’arf ’opin dat dey wud call after ’er: de last time she saw dem, dey wer tryin to put de Dormowse into de teapot.

# Back-translation into Standard English

*A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland*

Unpublished typescript. 1990

Translated into Scouse by Marvin R. Sumner

Back-translated into Standard English and notes added by Patrick Honeybone

*Twinkle,<sup>1</sup> twinkle, little bat!*

*How I wonder what you're at!"*

"You know the song, do you, then<sup>2</sup>?"

"I've heard something like it," said Alice.

"It goes on, you know," the Hatter continued, "in this way:—

*Up above the world you fly,*

*Like a tea-tray in the sky.*

*Twinkle, twinkle—"*

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<sup>1</sup> The first three words in the original, like many others in this Scouse version of *Alice*, are rendered in non-standard English spellings. 'Scouse' is the common name for the dialect of English spoken in and around the city of Liverpool, England, so this translation of *Alice* is from one dialect of English into another. Although there is other dialect literature in Scouse (some of it well known in Liverpool) there is no standard Scouse orthography, so the author has likely invented many of his own spelling conventions (perhaps also basing some of them on those of previous Scouse dialect literature). Many words in the Scouse text use standard English spellings, but the majority do not – they either authentically represent aspects of specifically Scouse phonology (as in *de* 'the' and *sumtin* 'something' which represent Scouse *th*-stopping) or occasionally Scouse vocabulary, or are "eye dialect" spellings which simply imply a pronunciation which is also found in standard (and many other) dialects. *Twinkel* and *littul* are examples of eye dialect, as the words end in an *l* phonetically in most accents of English. The use of a large amount of eye dialect in the Scouse text (around a quarter of the words used are in eye dialect spellings) is doubtless intended to make the text look less like the Standard English original, and to emphasise that it is intended to represent Scouse, not Standard English.

<sup>2</sup> Another way in which the Scouse version is made to look less like Standard English (in addition to use of eye dialect discussed in note 1) is that words which form a foot or a phrase are sometimes run together orthographically, as in *doyeray*, which is, literally, 'do you, eh'.

Here the Dormouse<sup>3</sup> shook itself and began singing in its sleep “*Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle—*” and went on so long that they had to pinch it to make it stop.

“Well, I’d hardly finished the first verse,” said the Hatter, “when the Queen bawled out, ‘He’s murdering the time! Off with his head!’”

“How dreadfully savage!” exclaimed Alice.

“And ever since that,” the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, “He won’t do a thing I ask! It’s always six o’clock now.”

A bright idea came into Alice’s head. “Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?” she asked.

“Yes, that’s it,” said the Hatter with a sigh: “It’s always tea-time, and we’ve no time to wash the things between whiles.”

“Then you keep moving round, I suppose?” said Alice.

“Exactly so,” said the Hatter: “as the things get used up.”

“But what happens when you come to the beginning again?” Alice ventured to ask.

“Suppose we change the subject,” the March Hare interrupted, yawning. “I’m getting tired of this. I vote the young girl tells us a story.”

“I’m afraid I don’t know one,” said Alice, rather alarmed at the proposal.

“Then the Dormouse shall!” the both cried. “Wake up, Dormouse!” And they pinched it on both sides at once.

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<sup>3</sup> As Scouse is a dialect of English, there was no need to rename the Dormouse in this version, unlike in many other translations (which were written for readers in countries where dormice are unknown). The word is retained in the Scouse version, although there are unlikely to be many dormice in urban Liverpool, and the animal is generally now quite rare in Britain. This is sensible because dormice are still known in popular culture. The word is consistently spelt as *Dormowse* in the text. This is a kind of eye dialect spelling as it does not represent a difference between the pronunciation of the word in Scouse and that in other varieties of English. The impetus to use eye dialect spellings in order to make the text look less like the Standard English original is all the clearer in this case because the spelling with <ow> does not represent the pronunciation of the word any better than does the Standard English spelling with <ou>.

The Dormouse slowly opened its eyes. “I wasn’t asleep,” it said in a hoarse, feeble voice, “I heard every word you lot were saying.”

“Tell us a story!” said the March Hare.

“Yes, please do, friend!”<sup>4</sup> pleaded Alice.

“And be quick about it,” added the Hatter, “or you’ll be asleep again before it’s done.”

“Once upon a time there were three sisters,” the Dormouse began in a great hurry; “and their names were Elsie, Lacie and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well—”

“What did they live on?” said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

“They lived on treacle,” said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

“They couldn’t’ve done that, you know,” Alice said, in a very gentle way.<sup>5</sup> “They’d’ve been ill.”

“So they were,” said the Dormouse; “*very* ill.”

Alice tried a little to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary way of living would be like, but it puzzled her too much: so she went on: “But why did they live at the bottom of a well?”

“Take some more tea,” the March Hare said to Alice, earnestly.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Friend’ is an attempt to translate the Scouse word *lar*, which is generally thought to derive from *lad*, through elision of the final consonant, and is often also spelt *la* in Scouse dialect spelling. It is used in the same way that *pal*, *buddy*, *mate* are used in other dialects, but none of these translations seems right for a Standard English *Alice*. The author has added it to the text as a discourse particle, in an authentic way.

<sup>5</sup> The use of *ded gentul like* ‘dead gentle like’ to translate Carroll’s *gently* is one of the few cases in this passage where lexis is used in the Scouse version which is authentically different from the original. This is not surprising, as Scouse has little unique vocabulary, and it most clearly marked off from other varieties of English at the phonological level. *Dead* (spelt *ded*, here) is a common intensifier in the North of England (and is also used in several other places in the text), and *like* is a common discourse particle in Scouse. Scouse, like many non-standard dialects, does not mark adverbs of this sort with *-ly*, and this is likely why the translator has reformulated the phrase.

“I’ve had nothing yet,” Alice replied in an offended tone: “so I can’t take more.”

“You mean you can’t take *less*,” said the Hatter: “it’s very easy to take *more* than nothing.”

“Nobody asked *your* opinion,” said Alice.

“Who’s making personal remarks now?” the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice didn’t quite know what to say to this: so she helped herself to some tea and bread-and-butter, and then turned to the Dormouse, and repeated her question. “Why did they live at the bottom of a well?”

The Dormouse again took a minute or two to think about it, and then said “It was a treacle-well.”

“There’s no such thing!” Alice was getting very annoyed, but the Hatter and the March Hare went “Sh! Sh!” and the Dormouse sulkily remarked “If you can’t be civil, you’d better finish the story for yourself.”

“No, please go on!” Alice said, very humbly. “I won’t interrupt you again. I dare say there may be *one*.”

“One, indeed!” said the Dormouse indignantly. However, he consented to go on. “And so these three little sisters—they were learning to draw, you know—”

“What did they draw?” said Alice, quite forgetting her promise.

“Treacle,” said the Dormouse, without considering at all, this time.

“I want a clean cup,” interrupted the Hatter: “Let’s all move one place on.”

He moved on as he spoke, and the Dormouse followed him: the March Hare moved into the Dormouse’s place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change; and Alice was a good deal worse off than before, as the March Hare had just upset the milk-jug into his plate.

Alice didn’t wish to offend the Dormouse again, so she began very cautiously: “But I don’t understand. Where did they draw the treacle from?”

“You can draw water out of a water-well,” said the Hatter; “so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-well—eh, stupid?”

“But they were *in* the well,” Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice this last remark.

“Of course they were,” said the Dormouse: “well in.”

This answer so confused poor Alice, that she let the Dormouse go on for some time without interrupting it.

“They were learning to draw,” the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very tired; “and they drew all sorts of things—everything that begins with an M—”

“Why with an M?” said Alice.

“Why not?” said the March Hare.

Alice was silent.

The Dormouse had closed its eyes by this time, and was going off into a doze; but, on being pinched by the Hatter, it woke up again with a little shriek, and went on: “—that begins with an M, such as mousetraps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness—you know you say things are ‘much of a muchness’—did<sup>6</sup> you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?”

“Really, now you’re asking,” said Alice, very confused, “I don’t think—”

“Then you shouldn’t talk,” said the Hatter.

This bit of rudeness was more than Alice could take: she got up, very annoyed, and walked off: the Dormouse fell asleep instantly, and neither of the others took the least bit of notice of her going, though she looked back once or twice, half hoping that they would call after her: the last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot.

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<sup>6</sup> The Scouse form is *d’yer*, which could be ‘do you’ or ‘did you’, and is, in fact, more likely to be the former as the latter might be expected to be spelled as *didger* or something else which retains some representation of the second /d/. The sense implies the past tense, however.

Original version

A SCOUSE INTERPRETATION  
OF  
ALICE IN WONDERLAND

BY  
MARVIN R. SUMNER

1990

\* Twinkel, twinkel, littul bat!

'Ow I wunder wot yor at!"

"Yunnaw de song doyeray?"

"I've herd sumtin like it," sed Alice.

"It goezon, yernow," de 'atter kontinyewed, "in diss way:--

\* Up above de werld yew fly,

Like a tea-tray in de sky.

Twinkel, twinkel---

'Ere de Dormowse shuk itzself an began singin innitz sleep" \*Twinkel, twinkel, twinkel, twinkel----" an wenn on so long dat dey 'ad to pinch it to make it stop.

"Well, I'd 'ardly finished de ferst verse," sed de 'atter, "wenn de Kween bawled out, 'E'z murdrin de time! Off wid 'iz 'ead!" "

" 'Ow dredfully savidge!" eksclaimed Alice.

"An ever since dat," de 'atter wenn on inna mornful tone, " 'E woan do a ting I ask! It's orlwayz sixa klok now."

A brite idea came into Alicez 'ead. "Is dat de reezun so meny tea-tingz are purrout 'ere?" she asked.

"Yes, datz it," sed de 'atter wid a sigh: "It's orlwayz tea-time, an weev no time to wash de tingz between wilez."

"Denn yew keep moovin rownd, I suppoze?" sed Alice.

"Eggzakly so," sed de 'atter: "az de tingz get uzed up."

"But worrappenz wenn yew cum to de beginnin agenn?" Alice ventured to ask.

"suppoze we change de subjekt," de March 'are interrupted, yawning. "I'm gerrin tired ov diss. I vote de yung gerl tellz uz a story."



"I'm afrade I doan now won," sed Alice, radder alarmed at de propozal.

"Denn de Dormowse shall!" dey both kride. "Wake up, Dormowse!"

An dey pinched irron both sidez at wonce.

De Dormowse slowly opened its eyez. "I wosn asleep," it sed inna 'orse, feeble voice, "I herd every werd yew lot wer sayin."

"Telluz a story!" sed de March 'are.

"Yes, please do lar!" pleaded Alice.

"An be kwick abarrit," added de 'atter, "or yew'll be asleep agenn befor it's dunn."

"Wonce upon a time der wer three sisterz," de Dormowse began inna grate 'urry; "an der namez wer Elsie, Lacie, an Tillie; an dey lived at de bottum ov a well----"

"Wot did dey live on?" sed Alice, 'oo orlwayz tuk a grate intrest in kwestchunz ov eetin an drinkin.

"Dey lived on treekel," sed de Dormowse, after tinkin a minnit or two.

"Dey kuddena dunn dat, yunno," Alice sed ded gentul like. "dey'da been ill."

"So dey wer," sed de Dormowse; " \*very ill."

Alice tried a littel to fancy to 'erself wot sucha ekstraordinry way ov livin wud be like, burrit puzzelled 'er to much: so she wenn on: "But why did de live at de bottum ov a well?"

"Take sum mor tea," de March 'are sed to Alice, earnestly.

"I've 'ad nothin yet," Alice replied inna offended tone: "so I karnt take mor."

"Yew meen yew karnt take \*less," sed de 'atter: "it's ded eezy ter take \*mor dann nothin."

"Nobody asked \*yor opinyun," sed Alice.

" 'ooz makin persunal remarkz now?" de 'atter asked triumfanly.

Alice dinnt kwite now wot ter say ter diss: so she 'elped 'erself to sum tea an bred-an-butter, an denn terned ter de Dormowse, an repeeted 'er kwestchun. "Why did dey live at de bottum ov a well?"

De Dormowse agenn tuk a minnit or two ter tink abowt it, an denn sed "It wos a treekel-well."

"Derz no such ting!" Alice wos gettin ded narked, but de 'atter an de March 'are went "Sh! Sh!" an de Dormowse sulkily remarked "It yew karnt be civil, yew'd berrer finish de story for yorself."

"No, pleeze go on!" Alice sed ded 'umbel. "I woan innerupt yew agenn. I der say der may be \*won.

"Won, indeed!" sed de Dormowse indignantly. 'Owever, 'e konsented ter go on. "An so deez three littel sisterz - dey wer lernin ter draw, yunnnow----"

"Wot did dey draw?" sed Alice, kwrite forgettin 'er promise.

"Treekel," sed de Dormowse, widdout konsidrin arrall, diss time.

"I wanna kleen cup," innerupted de 'atter: "Letz orl moov won place on."

'E mooved on az 'e spoke, an de Dormowse follied 'im: de March 'are mooved into de Dormowsez place, an Alice radder unwillinly tuk de place ov de March 'are. De 'atter wos de only won 'oo gorreny advantidge from de change; an Alice wos a gud deel werse off dann befor, az de March 'are 'ad just upset de milk-jug into 'iz plate.

Alice dinnt wish to offend de Dormowse agenn, so she began very korshusly: "Burri doan unnerstand. Wer did dey draw de treekel from?"

"Yewkin draw warter arrova warter-well," sed de 'atter; "so I shud tink yew kud draw treekel arrova treekel-well - eh, stewpid?"

"But dey wer \*in de well," Alice sed ter de Dormowse, not chewzin ter notice diss last remark.

"Ov korse dey wer," sed de Dormowse: "well in."

Diss anser so konfuzed pore Alice, dat she let de Dormowse go on for sum time widdout inneruptin it.

"Dey wer lernin to draw," de Dormowse wenn on, yornin an rubbin its eyez, for it wos gettin dogtired; "an dey drew orl sortza tingz - everytin dat beginz widd a M----"

"Why widd a M?" sed Alice.

"Why not?" sed de March 'are.

Alice wos silent.

De Dormowse 'ad clozed its eyez by diss time, anwos goin off into a doze; but, on bein pinched by de 'atter; it woke up agenn widd a littel shreek, an wenn on: "----dat beginz widd a M, such az mowsetrapz, an de moon, an memry, an muchness - yew now yew say tingz are 'much ov a muchness' - d'yer ever see such a ting az a drawin ov a muchness?"

"Reely, now yor askin," sed Alice, ded konfewsed, "I doan tink----"

"Denn yew shudden tawk," sed de 'atter.

Diss birra roodness wos mor dann Alice kud take: she gorrupt inna big 'uff, an warked off: de Dormowse fell asleep instanly, an neider ov de udderz tuk de leest birra notice ov 'er goin, doe she lukked back wonce or twice, 'arf'opin dat dey wud call after 'er: de last time she saw dem, dey wer tryin to put de Dormowse into de teapot.